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19 March 1953

3-8224

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**CONFIDENTIAL****MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION**

on 19 March 1953

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1.

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His general observations, somewhat hastily given, may be summed up as follows:

a. The general succession.

It all was decided before Stalin's death, by Stalin with a view toward insuring his unique position in history. He had no desire to have his epoch followed by a Molotov epoch in the same way that he followed Lenin's and therefore intentionally subordinated Molotov, the old "comrade in arms", to not only Malenkov but also Beriya who could be called no more than "pupil".

His only real friend Voroshilov was given the honor and comfort of the presidency and will doubtless hold that for his declining years.

The demotion of Molotov cannot be overestimated: for years he was the real Executive Vice-President of the Soviet Union far closer to Stalin in actual authority than his next nearest rival was to him. This he illustrated graphically with his hands placing Molotov six inches below Stalin and "all the others" two feet or more below him.

Malenkov's appointment should not be construed as a return from exile. He got a little too big for his britches and was sent to unglamorous assignments by Stalin but never was really out of favor. Stalin knows his worth and undoubtedly picked him as part of the strongest team he could find, no one number of which would be able to build up pre-eminent prestige.

b. Character sketch of Malenkov.

Malenkov is extremely intelligent, and was at least in 1934, very pleasant and reasonable. He served under Yezhov when the latter was chief of personnel prior to taking over the NKVD. He is most noteworthy as an administrator particularly finding the right man for the right job irrespective of doctrinaire questions such as proletarian background or mystery of Marxism.

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██████ feels that his real leap to power came after the debacles of 1941 when Voroshilov and Budenny -- and in fact Stalin himself -- were found professionally incapable of managing a large modern war. It was Malenkov's nominations for colonel-generals and marshals pattern that gave the Soviet army the leadership with which it won the war. In fact it was he who put the finger on Rokossovsky who was still languishing in a concentration camp as a result of the '38 purge. ██████ ran through a considerable list of top military figures including Malinovsky, Konev, and Sokolovsky, but I would hesitate to say which he particularly attributes to Malenkov's selection.

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c. Malenkov's health

He believes that Malenkov has a weak heart and that this condition existed twenty years ago. He recalls Malenkov's reluctance to walk uphill even though at that time he was not noticeably overweight. Now with his 250 pounds of blubber, he feels that his expectancy is rather short.

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2. This entire conversation was hurried and frequently interrupted. It is obvious that ██████ should be intensively interrogated by expert. He was very receptive to my suggestion that he come down from New York on a set date for dinner and an uninterrupted evening's discussion. This will be arranged sometime within the next few weeks.

SIGNED

ROBERT AMERY, JR.

Assistant Deputy Director/Intelli, etc

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